

NSC BRIEFING

19 March 1958

FRANCE AND GENERAL DE GAULLE (short)

- I. In view of mounting French troubles, widening range of responsible opinion seriously considering chances for return of De Gaulle.
- II. De Gaulle apparently feels time ripening for his return and is becoming active contender for political power.
 - A. De Gaulle's morale and health have improved and many French leaders consulting him.
- III. But De Gaulle has given no indication he would return unless assembly accedes to his terms.
 - A. His conditions for returning are guarantee of untrammelled authority for two or three years, during which time he would revise constitution providing stronger executive.
 - B. De Gaulle sees need for complete reform of French political institutions. Pronouncements on economic policy rare.
- IV. De Gaulle's solution for North Africa is for autonomous Algeria, which with Tunisia, Morocco would be federally associated with France.
 - A. Ultra-rightists may break with him on this.
- V. De Gaulle affirms basic friendship to US but recently his notion that US is out to "nibble away" at the remainder of French Empire has become obsession and colors his foreign policy views.
 - A. Moreover, he fears US will make "deal" with USSR at expense of France.

B. He believes Soviets are not interested in making war and sees possibilities of French-Soviet deal to give France and Western Europe time to "rebuild strength."

C.

D. He also desires to pull France out of Common Market and probably EURATOM and favors instead "United Europe" apparently without supernational institution.

VI. Prospects for his return considerably improved as both Socialist and Rightist leaders now reported to believe that assembly majority favor his return.

A. While Assembly would still be reluctant to resign its power, North African debacle or another prolonged crisis could result in De Gaulle's recall.